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CHAPTER SIX

LAND USE



“Long-range Planning does not deal with future decisions,
but with the future of present decisions.”

--Peter F. Drucker, management consultant and writer--

The Comprehensive Plan...

for Marion County has, over the years, primarily been a map or series of maps, showing recommended land uses with enough accompanying text to provide a better understanding of the maps. However, Indiana State law encourages jurisdictions to create comprehensive plans that best meet the needs of the jurisdiction. This plan moves beyond only making land use recommendations to suggesting improved methods (ordinances, policies, and procedures) to implement the land use recommendations. The plan also makes recommendations on topics that have not traditionally been found in Marion County's land use plans. These topics are also important to citizens and neighborhoods because they support the physical development and redevelopment of the City.

This chapter focuses on what uses will be made of the various parts of the Indianapolis landscape. It expresses the land use goals of this plan and sets forth the standards on which the land use recommendations were based.

Land Use Goals

- Specify land use categories and critical areas to reduce interpretive errors, eliminate the destruction of environmentally-sensitive areas, conserve natural resources and project appropriate land use intensities based on the capacities of supporting or planned infrastructure.
- Integrate transportation system planning with land use development strategies to increase industry access to local, domestic and international business markets.
- Promote an appropriate level of land use regulation to encourage the expansion of business and industry while ensuring compatibility with existing or proposed neighborhoods.
- Designate land sites and provide infrastructure to encourage growth in the industry clusters that can be demonstrated as current or probable future strengths of the city.
- Minimize deviations from adopted land use plans by providing the City-County Council, Metropolitan Development Commission, and the Board of Zoning Appeals with appropriate guidelines for making land use decisions.
- Reflect regional land uses and development patterns in Marion County's land use plan.
- Provide all Marion County residents, whether in established or developing neighborhoods, a variety of convenient parks and greenways.
- Protect existing parks and greenways from encroachment.
- Develop new venues for arts and cultural activities throughout the city.

- Build an adequate supply of public schools to accommodate children from new housing developments.
- Provide accessible health care.
- Develop a range of housing types, for owners and renters of all income levels in each township, to support the diverse need for housing in our community and to encourage homeownership.
- Incorporate a mix of uses where applicable, in the planning, design, development, and/or redevelopment of neighborhoods, support multi-accessible amenities such as neighborhood shopping, schools, libraries, parks and quality employment.
- Clean up and reuse areas with environmental contamination and clarify the status of areas perceived to have environmental contamination.

LAND USE		
Environmental/Infrastructure/Transportation Issues		
Recommendations	Responsible parties	Comments
Encourage property owners to preserve their land in its natural state for its beauty and to provide a habitat for wildlife.	Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD), Also Private Land Trust, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Property Owners	
Assemble and preserve lands and corridors for regional scale parks, open space, recreation needs and natural areas.	DMD, DPR, Also Private Land Trust other towns, cities and counties in the region	Regional parks serve a larger population base, require larger contiguous land areas and may require multi-county support.
Promote the reuse of brownfields as open space and green space.	DMD, DPR	

LAND USE	Environmental/Infrastructure/Transportation Issues	
Recommendations	Responsible parties	Comments
Provide linkages for parks and recreation areas in the region using trails, greenways, pathways and bike routes. These linkages should serve both recreational needs and as transportation alternatives.	DMD, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), DPR, other towns, cities and counties in the region	While many park and recreation needs are met near people's homes, some recreational services and facilities are geared to a regional scale. Some popular local recreation services and facilities can be linked by trails and greenways and be accessible to citizens in several jurisdictions.
Strongly discourage use of parkland for non-park purposes; any taking of parkland should be at market value, as a direct purchase, lease arrangement or trade for similar land in the vicinity.	DPR, DMD	
Promote use of the cluster option available in the Dwelling District Zoning Ordinance as a valuable tool for preservation of woodlands.	DMD, DPR, environmental organizations, neighborhood assocs.	
Develop agricultural zoning and farmland protection tools for the region. Indianapolis-Marion County is expected to become fully urbanized.	Other land use planning agencies in region, Also, Land Trusts with Farmland Protection Goals	Marion County could be a "receiving area" if "development rights transfers" ever become a regional growth management tool. "Sending areas" would be areas planned for agricultural land uses within the surrounding counties.
Encourage brownfield redevelopment through the development and implementation of financial incentives to address barriers to redevelopment.	Brownfield Coordinator	

LAND USE Environmental/Infrastructure/Transportation Issues		
Recommendations	Responsible parties	Comments
Closely coordinate future land use planning with transportation systems plans.	DMD, MPO, IndyGo	Work toward greater transportation options over time.
Use land use controls and thoroughfare enhancement to channel high volume traffic away from neighborhoods.	DMD, Department of Public Works (DPW)	
Preserve rights-of-way for future regional public transportation.	DMD, MPO	
Preserve existing rail rights-of-way and identify those that should be reserved for future mass transit use.	DMD, MPO	
Identify and prioritize areas requiring infrastructure improvements in the following categories: roadways, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water and high-speed cable transmission.	DMD, DPW	
Consult the Central Indiana Regional Citizens League's 7 Point Transportation and Land Use Vision Plan as valuable principles for land use planning.	DMD	See Appendix B
Utilize growth management principles in deploying new infrastructure.	MPO	
Determine land, roadway and utility requirements for enterprises, such as research and development, which promote advanced manufacturing, marketable internet applications, bio-tech innovations or cargo distribution (specifically by air, ground and rail transportation) to enhance or create a "critical mass" of these and other industries in the City.	City, Utilities, Indy Partnership	

LAND USE			County Level Issues	
Recommendations	Responsible parties	Comments		
Provide an appropriate range of zoning options within the land use categories.	DMD, MCANA			
Designate sufficient quantities of industrial, commercial, institutional and residential (both single-family and multi-family) land uses within the various taxing districts, in order to provide a balanced tax base and remediate the effects of non-taxed public, semi-public and special uses.	DMD, Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations (MCANA), Chamber of Commerce			
Use inter-local agreements to ensure compatible land use plans and procedures on jurisdiction borders. Determine "border impact" areas where inter-local coordination is essential.	DMD			
Build new fire and police stations to serve growing areas, to maintain a maximum of four-minute response time.	Indianapolis Police Department (IPD), Marion County Sheriff's Department (MCSD), Department of Public Safety (DPS), All fire depts.	United States Fire Administration recommends a response time of 4 minutes and a 1.5 mile radius.		
Develop satellite health care centers within the community.	Community centers of Indianapolis. (CCI), Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County (HHMC), foundations churches, health care providers federal & state government	Health care centers can be successfully integrated into community centers, churches and schools through community partnerships.		

LAND USE		
Neighborhood Level Issues		
Recommendations	Responsible parties	Comments
Discourage residential land uses in highway interchange areas, rail yards, airports, inter-modal terminals and place these land uses where noise, traffic and light conflicts are lessened.	DMD and other land use planning agencies in region	
Investigate the potential public impediments to non-profit and for-profit redevelopment efforts and reduce these where practical.	DMD	
Continue to redevelop blighted and deteriorating areas proactively and in partnerships among the City, local non-profit developers, neighborhood associations, community centers and for-profit developers.	DMD	
Provide flexible zoning districts and procedures to attract new uses for obsolete structures and sites. Consider a planned unit development approach for the special needs of redevelopment projects.	DMD	Land use maps should provide for new mixed-use areas.
Return relatively new but, large vacant or under-used structures and the land they sit on to productive use and the generation of tax revenues.	Indy Partnership, utility companies, DMD	These areas are often called greyfields. They are frequently large retail spaces fronted by large "fields" of gray asphalt parking lots.
Consider the development of new "mixed income and use neighborhoods" on underutilized land, including large retail sites and shopping centers that are now obsolete.	DMD	Older shopping centers may be large enough to be "resized" for smaller scale retail while allowing residential uses on the remainder. Starting with a large parcel under single ownership is an advantage.

LAND USE		
Neighborhood Level Issues		
Recommendations	Responsible parties	Comments
Allow multiple story or higher density retail development to fit new retail to existing lots.	DMD	
Preserve the city's stock of affordable housing; existing housing for the elderly and special needs persons is frequently convenient to relevant personal services and should be preserved as such.	DMD and Community Development Corporations (CDCs)	Some housing types may be especially good fits for redevelopment areas where shopping, transit and other services are existing or improving.

Mapping Standards

Delineating the land use recommendation maps is one of the most important tasks involved in developing a comprehensive plan. A series of standards was developed to facilitate the delineation by providing consistency and reminding the delineators of the wide range of considerations they must keep in mind as they did their work. The following list of mapping standards represents the work of the Issue Committees as informed by the direction of the Steering Committee and principles of good planning

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards: When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	Justification
identify critical groundwater resource areas	Protection of drinking water supply
recommend land uses in wellfields that have less pollution potential uses such as parks, open space, residences, and office development	Protection of drinking water supply

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards:	Justification
When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	
identify natural features that provide for clean water benefits, i.e. wetlands (natural and constructed), forested tracts, ravines, and feeder streams or headwater areas	To raise level of awareness of these attributes
propose land uses that are likely to have the least impact on increasing flooding and are likely to be the least impacted by flooding within the floodplains	To decrease the risk of flooding within each watershed and to minimize damages when flooding occurs.
Native forest fragments, riparian corridors, stands of native trees, wooded wetlands and important urban and pioneer woodlands should be depicted as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. The City of Ann Arbor, MI's "Guidelines for the Protection and Mitigation of Natural Features" is a good example of the system proposed.	Preservation of trees is in the public interest because of their function in reducing air pollution through absorption of carbon dioxide and gaseous pollutants and the filtering of particulates, modifying extremes of noise, temperature and humidity, protecting against soil erosion by catching and holding precipitation in both the leaves and root systems, preserving water quality through absorption of nitrogen and filtering of nutrients, sediments and pollutants and cooling of streamwater in summer, providing wildlife habitats and areas for recreation and offering economic and aesthetic benefits.
Coordinate with the Thoroughfare Plan.	Combines the objectives of minimizing deviations from the land use plan and maintaining an acceptable "level-of-service" on thoroughfares.
Realize the inter-relationship of land use planning and alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. If single occupancy vehicles are relied upon exclusively, land development must include sufficient parking and will tend to be at lower densities. Mass transit will not be as effective in these cases.	Certain land development options depend upon higher densities, pedestrian scale and less land devoted to automobile parking.

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards: When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	Justification
Recommend residential densities greater than 3.5 units per acre for areas near concentrations of employment or near major commercial centers.	Provides a stepped transition from high intensity land uses to lower intensity land uses and provides more persons with walking/bicycling options.
recommend residential densities in the 5 to 8 units per acre category or greater for areas on bus routes.	Provides great enough densities for a functional bus system.
recommend residential densities in the 8 to 15 units per acre category or greater for areas near proposed light rail stations.	Provides great enough densities for a functional light rail system.
note the need for transportation corridor plans that extend over county lines.	
provide sites for inter-modal transportation transfer facilities, including park and ride locations.	
develop stream valleys and transportation corridors for multiple use (utility, recreation) purposes.	Note the cost and difficulties in reestablishing single ownership and access when existing rail corridors are abandoned.
recognize the regional impact of the Indianapolis International Airport, make the most of air related cargo and passenger opportunities. Promote the coordination of land use and zoning policies with Marion County, Hendricks County, Morgan County, Plainfield and Mooresville to ensure compatible land uses in lands near the airport.	New airport related development would likely be in large-scale projects, requiring overall master plans. These projects may straddle governmental boundaries, but need to be uniformly planned and developed. Development standards should not vary because of jurisdictional boundaries. Opportunities for competitive and efficient development projects should not be compromised when they may include more than one local government.

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards:	Justification
When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	
recognize the probability of the expansion of the Indianapolis International Airport (midfield terminal, third runway and additional cargo distribution sites).	
ensure that land use recommendations are consistent with the anticipated capacity of supporting infrastructure.	As an example, locating very low-density residential recommendations along primary arterials is not appropriate.
use the concept of Critical Areas as established in the 1990-1993 plan; critical areas should be used sparingly to retain the "specialness" that is their value.	Critical areas along Marion County edges may need thoughtful coordination among localities.
make certain that targeted business clusters can be sited in mutually supportive locations.	Various economic development, academic and business groups should be consulted to ensure that land use codes will allow businesses to locate in the same building or complex.
recommend development of mixed-use communities throughout the region from redevelopment areas to greenfields.	One advantage of this is that it will allow alternate forms of transportation such as transit, walking or biking, reducing the number and length of automobile trips.
consult the adopted plans of neighboring planning jurisdictions when preparing updates to the Marion County Plan. Deal with conflicts of land use types near edges with Marion County.	
recommend a mix of land uses, including a mix of residential uses, that provides for a healthy tax base for the various taxing bodies.	

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards:	Justification
When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	
provide transition of uses between residential areas and more intense uses. Office, service-related commercial uses, and multi-family residential should be used to transition between single-family residential, school, and religious uses and more intense land uses.	
look for rational boundaries inside which non-residential land uses have room to grow. Do not sacrifice stable residential areas.	Redevelopment areas are more likely to have residences located very close by, with predictable conflicts.
provide reasonable and effective growth areas around major employment centers. Establish sufficient room for viable business areas to expand. Compare existing land use plans with zoning. See when isolated residential uses may deter business expansions.	Established employers may need assistance in keeping their facilities attractive and competitive. Examples: more employee parking, larger maneuvering areas for trucks, loading, better space arrangements for modern business methods.
recognize the needs for a strong regional business, social and cultural center as well as modern well-planned suburban employment centers.	Emphasize the benefits of having multiple site location options for office, research, industry and warehouse-distribution facilities in the region.
consider public safety impacts.	Traffic congestion can impede response time. Access can be a problem for emergency services along some trails as well as the layout of some subdivisions.
use the parks-to-population standard set forth in "Pathways to the Future, the Indianapolis-Marion County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan" or updates of this plan. At this time the standard is 17.3 acres of parkland for every 1000 persons of actual or projected population.	"Pathways to the Future" represents an extensive public planning process and adoption by the Board of Parks and Recreation and the Metropolitan Development Commission. This standard should be applied at a sub-township level.

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards:	Justification
When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	
provide a park within 1 mile of each residential development.	Each neighborhood should expect to have a park within convenient walking or bicycling distance.
use the updated Indianapolis Greenways Plan as the basis for the Linear Park designations. Additions to the updated plan can be included to provide improve connections among neighborhoods, parks and community amenities through a variety of path, trail and sidewalk options.	The updated Indianapolis Greenways Plan represents an extensive public planning process and adoption by the Board of Parks and Recreation and the Metropolitan Development Commission.
coordinate with the Indianapolis Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	
provide greenways links through jurisdictional borders.	This is a land use that can serve to complement other land uses with improved access, and serve as a buffer or transitional area between certain less compatible land uses.
distribute community assets and services throughout Indianapolis. There should be a broad array of community services in each part of the community, including social services, recreation, childcare, and similar assets community/ intergenerational centers.	A balance of land uses is beneficial for the tax base.
ensure that all existing or proposed interstate interchanges will be developed for high value, highway oriented land uses. Insist on land development that provides strong tax base and job potentials.	Examples of new interchanges: New I-70/Six Points Road (airport area) Possible German Church Rd/I-70 (Marion County) Possible I-65/ County Road 750 North (Johnson County)

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards: When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	Justification
large tracts of undeveloped land near interstate interchanges and transit stops should be reserved for mixed-use industrial and commercial development.	Interstate interchanges are appropriate locations for park and ride facilities and industrial/commercial developments. Noise concerns with the interstate dictates limiting residential development.
propose appropriate land uses along an interstate route to the southwest, in the event a final corridor is designated.	The proposed Interstate 69 extension has the potential of opening several markets. Potential land uses should not interfere with the extension and operation of this interstate.
identify areas with a concentration of the arts as Arts Districts.	Creating arts districts improves the economic base of Indianapolis by generating tourism and enhancing the community.
recognize the difficult siting problems for new communications & utility infrastructure and solid waste disposal facilities. These facilities must be constructed to meet growing demands in all central Indiana.	Many necessary structures and facilities are unpopular. It is best to make the best use of existing rights-of-way for linear facilities. Make the maximum use of solid waste facilities by recycling, waste reductions, and landfill management.
develop the land use plan to include a variety of housing types and densities in redevelopment areas.	
identify areas with established architectural and historic qualities where potential overlay districts can bolster preservation and restoration.	New development that respects its historic settings can enhance preservation and restoration of existing structures.

MAPPING STANDARDS	
Standards:	Justification
When developing the recommended land use maps for Marion County:	
identify areas with a cohesive character for similar overlay zoning even if these areas do not meet historic district standards.	Areas that may not meet historic district standards may still have qualities that may be adversely affected by new development that does not respect the established setting.
recognize that incremental conversion of residential properties to commercial uses along major corridors create commercial strips that often negatively impact adjacent properties and neighborhoods.	
note that many older retail outlets and lots do not fulfill contemporary marketing practices. Land may need to be reassembled in some cases to meet these requirements.	Example: Many original convenience stores (1970-80's) were built in remodeled gas stations. New C-stores are often much larger and are purpose-built. Lot depths and widths for modern retail may conflict with the typical lot sizes for older stores. The new sites may not accommodate more modern food retailing practices, with drive-up windows and parking spaces that do not conflict with gas dispensing.
designate no less than 50 contiguous acres, preferably an existing brownfield in an older suburban area in proximity to the downtown area, to promote the attraction or expansion of information technology, advanced manufacturing and life science industries.	Nurture the strengths of Indianapolis and create a brownfield redevelopment in Indianapolis as a model public-private cooperation effort.
delineate a suitable amount of property in proximity to IUPUI, in order to provide adequate area for expansion, while promoting an aesthetically pleasing campus.	IUPUI should be nurtured to ensure that it becomes a high-quality post-secondary education establishment.